

CELEBRATING 41 YEARS OF ACTION AT HOME FOR JUST POLICIES ABROAD



ANNUAL REPORT 2024



LAWG Executive Director Vicki Gass joins various NGO leaders in meeting with Guatemalan President Arévalo.

LAWG IN 2024

In 2024, LAWG deepened its role as a convener, organizer, agitator, and collaborator to build solidarity across borders and make positive change in favor of all human rights. For our member organizations and our Latin American partners, LAWG is a strategic ally in ensuring that policy makers and influencers promote policies and programs that strengthen and defend those rights. They expect LAWG to develop joint advocacy strategies; to keep them informed of adverse legislation that go against social justice principles; and to lead the charge towards just foreign policies.

Congressional offices use LAWG as a resource on Latin America and work with us to advance just policies. And concerned citizens across the United States like you look to us for opportunities to make your voice heard and take action when we send out alerts on an assassination attempt or repression of a public protest or anti-immigrant legislation.

This is the power of LAWG. ¡Gracias!



Program Associate Tania Del Moral & "Empty Graves, Empty Promises" delegation on Capitol Hill



LAWG Consultant/former ED Lisa Haugaard in congressional briefing with Alí Bantú Ashanti (Colectivo Justicia Racial), Gimena Sánchez-Garzoli (WOLA), & a Representative of the Embassy of Colombia.



Public event hosted with Alianza Americas and Central American journalists at LAWG offices titled: "Climate Change & Frontline Journalism: The Path to Protections & Sustainable Development."



LAWG staff & Summer Advocacy Interns on the stairs outside the U.S. Capitol.

WHO WE ARE

The Latin America Working Group advocates for U.S. policies that advance human rights, peace, and social, environmental, and economic justice in Latin America and the Caribbean. Our work is guided by our coalition partners in the United States and the region who have first hand knowledge of the issues. We work with them to educate policymakers and the public and to mobilize a diverse, and powerful grassroots base that can influence U.S. policymakers to achieve change and to defend grassroots leaders and organizations in Latin America who are defending their lands, fighting economic and environmental exploitation, promoting peace, and upholding justice.

The Latin America Working Group (LAWG), a 501(c)(4) nonprofit, carries out advocacy and grassroots education. The Latin America Working Group Education Fund (LAWGEF), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, sponsors educational events and publishes reports and updates. In this year's activities, lobbying tasks were carried out by LAWG, and educational tasks by LAWGEF.

A YEAR IN REVIEW: LAWG'S 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

- Organized delegations of leading human rights and LGBTQIA+ activists and defense lawyers from El Salvador to explain to policymakers the dangers of a second Bukele term, the human rights violations occurring under the state of emergency, and the urgency of the Biden administration to use the diplomatic tools available to force the Salvadoran government to end the state of emergency and restore the rule of law.
- In June, co-organized a series of meetings on Capitol Hill with Global Exchange, U.S. anti-gun violence movements, the Center for American Progress, U.S. and Mexican human rights groups, and arms control experts to make visible the role unregulated licit and illicit arms flow from the U.S. fuels the violence and disappearances of Mexicans and migrants in transition.
- Organized a social media campaign around the emblematic case of the 25 people from the Isla El Espíritu Santo arbitrarily arrested for alleged gang activity even though gangs have never had a presence on the island. LAWG developed a toolkit for our partners and members to contact their elected officials to call for the release of innocent people, allow families to see their loved ones in prison, and restore due process and presumption of innocence.
- With our partners ACERE, CEPR, Colombia Acuerdo de Paz and WOLA worked to get 46 leading U.S. representatives to send a letter to President Biden urging his administration to strengthen their support for the implementation of Colombia's 2016 peace accord and to reverse the Trump Administration's designation of Cuba as a state sponsor of terrorism (SSOT).



June press conference with Congressional Representatives and the Binational Agenda for Peace & Justice.



Graphic designed by the LAWG team for the Isla El Espíritu Santo social media campaign.

A YEAR IN REVIEW: LAWG'S 2024 HIGHLIGHTS



"Empty Graves, Empty Promises" reception in Rayburn House Office Building on 10th Anniversary of Ayotzinapa.



"Empty Graves, Empty Promises" event at BusBoys & Poets.



LAWG Executive Director Vicki Gass, Program Assistant Liam Crisan, and Fall Advocacy Intern Ella Brubaker meet with the State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program Latin America delegation.

- On the week of the tenth anniversary of the case of 43 disappeared students in Ayotzinapa, Guerrero, the LAWG organized a series of events titled "Empty Graves, Empty Promises: A Photographic Journey Into Mexico's Disappearance Crisis and the Role of the U.S." Empty Graves, Empty Promises featured fifteen photographs of families and survivors of the disappeared in Veracruz, Mexico, taken by survivor and artist Manuel Bayo Gisbert and had the testimonies of Antonio Tizapa and María de Jesús Salinas, both parents with missing children, and the experience of Omar Gómez Trejo, former prosecutor of the Ayotzinapa case. Representative Delia Ramirez (D-IL) gave welcoming remarks at the reception at the Rayburn House Office Building, and the delegation met with congressional staff of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, among others over the next few days.
- Convened and facilitated the Central America Migration Foreign Policy (CAMFP), the Colombia Steering Committee and the Cuba working groups to share information, debate tactics, and develop strategies.
- Circulated human rights alerts regarding attacks against defenders such as Javier Rojas Uriana in Colombia, Juan López in Honduras, and padre Marcelo in Mexico.



LATIN AMERICA
WORKING GROUP

WHAT OUR PARTNERS HAVE TO SAY

Our allies share stories of the Latin America Working Group



LATIN AMERICA
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Astrid Valencia, Deputy Director of the Amnesty International Secretariat for Latin America:

“LAWG has been a strategic ally in our efforts, particularly in Central America, enabling us to amplify our advocacy work and bring Central American voices to key decision-makers in order to improve the course of the region. Undoubtedly, LAWG's work will continue to be essential in raising awareness and fostering change to improve the human rights situation in Central America.”



Jesús de la Torre, Assistant Director for Global Migration at the Hope Border Institute:



“LAWG has been an indispensable partner for the Hope Border Institute in our work to address the root causes of forced migration in Central America. When we need to amplify the voices of our colleagues in the region advocating for better US policies towards Central America, LAWG takes the lead in coordinating with other colleagues and building critical bridges with decision-makers. When we want to advance new strategies to accompany people on the move, LAWG provides the spaces to foster reflection and advance solutions close to migrants' pains and dreams.”

***Verónica Reyna, Human Rights Director of
Servicio Social Pasionista (SSPAS) in El Salvador:***

“SSPAS has been developing advocacy work and political dialogue with key actors in the United States. LAWG has been essential to promote connections with decision makers, and to expose the human rights situation in El Salvador, and the impacts of democratic setbacks for our country, the United States and Latin America. LAWG has opened doors for public and private discussion on issues of relevance to El Salvador, advising from an intersectoral and proactive perspective. We consider them a key organization for articulated work and political advocacy.”



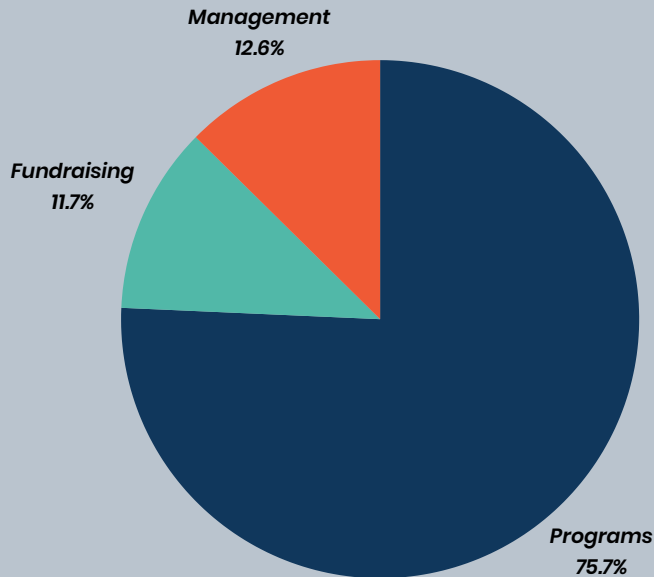
***Juan Francisco Sandoval Alfaro, former head of La
Fiscalía Especial contra la Impunidad in Guatemala:***



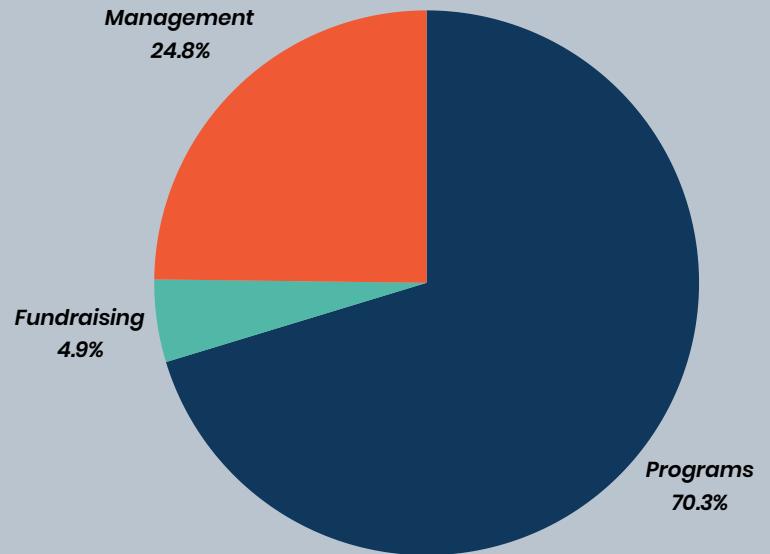
“I am a witness to the advocacy work that LAWG has done for the promotion of democracy in Guatemala, drawing attention to the threats that endanger it and creating space for frank and respectful dialogue to create the conditions for policies that strengthen democratic institutions and human rights. LAWG works in close collaboration with Guatemalan civil society partners working on human rights, ensuring that their voices are heard not only in the U.S. and Guatemala, but throughout Latin America. LAWG’s work is also essential for the defense of LGBTQI+, women, and Indigenous peoples in my country. Lastly, I cannot fail to mention the work that LAWG does on behalf of people forced to migrate from my country and the region, as well as all the political asylum seekers. Thanks to Vicki Gass and the entire LAWG team for their commendable work.”

OUR FINANCIALS & BOARD

LAWGEF EXPENSES



LAWG EXPENSES



FY2023

LAWGEF's income of \$472,151 in 2023 came from foundations, individual donors, and nongovernmental organizations. Expenditures for 2023 were \$357,628. LAWG's income of \$60,986.75 in 2023 came from foundations, individual donors, and coalition partners, including humanitarian, nongovernmental, and faith-based organizations. Income was supplemented by multi-year grants. Expenditures for 2023 were \$102,315.40. Contributions to LAWGEF are tax-deductible. Contributions to LAWG are not tax-deductible.

LAWGEF BOARD

Shaina Aber, President, Acacia Center for Justice
Bernice Romero, Secretary/Treasurer, Norwegian Refugee Council USA
Adriana Beltrán, Human Rights Advocate
Alaide Vilchis Ibarra, Value Our Families

LAWG BOARD

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Gary Cozette, Co-Founder, Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America
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Mavis Anderson, Cuba Expert
Mary Delorey, Latin America Expert
Charissa Zehr, Latin America Expert

MANY THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS

*AFL-CIO
AFL-CIO Solidarity Center
Alianza Americas
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Americans for Indian Opportunity
Amnesty International Secretariat
Amnesty International USA
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Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez
Centro de Intercambio y Solidaridad
Church World Service
Code Pink
Colombia Human Rights Committee
Cristosal
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Global Mission
ELCA, Washington Office
Global Exchange
Global Health Partners
Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA
Hope Border Institute
Institute for Policy Studies
International Institute on Race, Equality and Human Rights
International Labor Rights Forum
Loretto Community
Instituto para las Mujeres en la Migración, AC
Jesuit Conference Office of Justice and Ecology
Justice in Motion
Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)
Lutheran World Relief Office of Public Policy
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Mennonite Central Committee
Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Justice and Peace Office
Oxfam America
Peace Brigades International, USA
Presbyterian Church, USA
Quixote Center
Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice & Human Rights
Save the Children
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
United Church of Christ
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church & Society
Washington Office on Latin America
Witness for Peace Solidarity Collective*

** This list includes some of the groups participating. Participation does not imply endorsement of all LAWG/LAWGEF efforts. Decisions to endorse statements and campaigns are made on a case-by-case basis*

...& MANY THANKS TO OUR DONORS

A special thanks to our major donors, including: Ford Foundation, Open Society Foundation, Global Exchange, Church World Service, Hispanics in Philanthropy, and the Estate of Mary Anne Stein.

Together, you make our work possible. Here's to a productive 2024 and an even stronger 2025.